

REUTER

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WASHINGTON, April 12, REUTER - A SOVIET DIPLOMAT WALKED INTO A SMALL paneled room in Congress, sat down with a handful of reporters and began listening to a briefing by an American specialist on Soviet and intelligence matters.

It was only after an official saw that he had written "SOVIET EMBASSY" beside his name on a list of those present that the diplomat was escorted to the door.

The brief incident illustrated graphically the ease with which America's rival superpower can operate in this capital of open doors.

The ready access to all and sundry in the open society of the United States means that friends and foes alike are free to hear public discussions on such sensitive subjects as intelligence, foreign affairs and military matters.

It is a cause of concern to some Americans.

JAMES SCHLESINGER, a veteran spymaster who has served under three presidents, worries about the current public debate over a charter for U.S. intelligence agencies.

He recently told a committee of senators who are drafting the charter that they were faced with drawing up a lengthy and detailed list of specific do's and don'ts, establishing the criteria, limits and obligations not only for the intelligence community and the American people "but for the entire international audience as well."

Other democracies had not seriously considered such legislation, he said, and the last thing that was wanted was an extensive, public congressional debate on intelligence law.

Mr. Schlesinger, President Nixon's Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1973, said incalculable damage had already been done to the U.S. intelligence establishment, a community which extends far beyond one intelligence agency.

He was referring to the revelations of such CIA abuses as assassination plots against foreign leaders, drug testing and mind control experiments on unsuspecting human guinea pigs, CIA-inspired coups abroad and spying on Americans at home.

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MR SCHLESINGER, A VETERAN WARRIOR OF THE OLD COLD WAR WHO OPPOSES WRITING INTELLIGENCE GUIDELINES "IN TABLETS OF STONE", SAID THE QUEST FOR WHAT HE TERMED PURITY HAD CRIPPLED U.S. INTELLIGENCE.

"OUR ACTIONS HAVE BEEN VIEWED WITH AMAZEMENT BY FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES AND FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS -- WITH REGRET AND APPREHENSION BY OUR FRIENDS AND SHEER SCHADENFREUDE (MALICIOUS ENJOYMENT OF ANOTHER'S MISFORTUNES) BY OUR ENEMIES."

IT WAS TIME TO STOP THE SELF-ABUSE AND RESTORE STRICT DISCIPLINE AND MORALE, HE SAID, ADDING:

"THE UNITED STATES HAS SPENT MUCH OF THE LAST DECADE INDULGING IN SELF-FLAGELLATION; MUCH OF IT, THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT ALL, AT THE EXPENSE OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY."

HENRY KISSINGER, PRESIDENT NIXON'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER AND SUBSEQUENTLY SECRETARY OF STATE, BELIEVES THE UNITED STATES HAS DISMANTLED THE INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY ON WHICH THE POLICY OF PERMANENT GLOBAL INTERVENTIONISM DEPENDS.

"IRONICALLY," HE TOLD A RECENT CONFERENCE OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS, "MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE DECRIED COVERT INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES ARE URGING A POLICY OF OVERT INTERVENTION FAR MORE INTRUSIVE THAN WAS EVER IMAGINED IN WHAT CURRENT MYTHOLOGY PICTURES AS THE 'BAD OLD DAYS'."

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DR KISSINGER WAS REFERRING OF A NEW-FOUND WILLINGNESS IN THE COUNTRY TO FORGIVE THE CIA'S PAST ABUSES AND AN ACCEPTANCE OF UNDERCOVER WORK IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE OF FRUSTRATION OVER THE FAILURE TO RESOLVE THE CRISES IN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN.

E. DREXEL GODFREY, A PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY IN NEW JERSEY, SAID HE THOUGHT THIS ATTITUDE WAS MISGUIDED.

"FIRST, IT IS, I THINK, BASED ON THE MISTFULLY ROMANTIC NOTION THAT HAD CIA OPERATIVES BEEN FULLY DEPLOYED WHEN THESE CRISIS SITUATIONS ERUPTED, SOMEHOW THE AGENCY MIGHT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED THEM.

"THIS, OF COURSE, IS NONSENSE."

SECOND, HE SAID, THE PRESSURE TO SOFTEN SAFEGUARDS TENDED TO OBSCURE THE ORIGINAL REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING THE DELICATE BUSINESS OF PUTTING TOGETHER A CHARTER IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THESE WERE TO BRING U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES BACK UNDER STATUTORY CONTROL AND WORK OUT A FRAMEWORK EMPHASIZING LIMITS, NOT LICENSE."

ONE OF THE LIMITS IN THE CHARTER WOULD PROHIBIT ANY U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE FROM ASSASSINATING ANYONE, OR CONSPIRING OR ENCOURAGING ANYONE ELSE TO DO SO.

A COMMENT BY ROY GODSON, AN INTELLIGENCE SPECIALIST AT WASHINGTON'S GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, REFLECTS CONCERN OVER OPEN DISCUSSION OF SUCH THINGS. HE SAID:

"THE PROVISION WOULD PREVENT THE UNITED STATES -- IN ANY AND ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, REGARDLESS OF THE STAKES -- FROM TAKING EXTREME BUT NECESSARY ACTIONS WHICH SOVEREIGN STATES ALWAYS HAVE RESERVED THE RIGHT TO TAKE, ALTHOUGH NONE HAS BEEN SO FOOLHARDY AS TO TALK ABOUT IT."

THE DILEMMA, WHICH HAS BEEN DEBATED SINCE THE CIA WAS FOUNDED IN 1947, IS THIS: HOW TO RESOLVE THE TENSION BETWEEN THE NEED FOR SECRET INTELLIGENCE AND OPEN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

AFTER WORLD WAR II, MR SCHLESINGER RECALLS, THERE WAS CONCERN THAT AN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY MIGHT BECOME TOO POWERFUL, "THAT, IN THE INTELLECTUAL AMBIANCE OF THOSE YEARS, IT MIGHT RESULT IN A GESTAPO-TYPE ORGANIZATION."

THE JUDGMENT THEN, WHICH MR SCHLESINGER BELIEVES IS STILL VALID TODAY, WAS THAT COMPROMISES WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED."

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